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STREETS

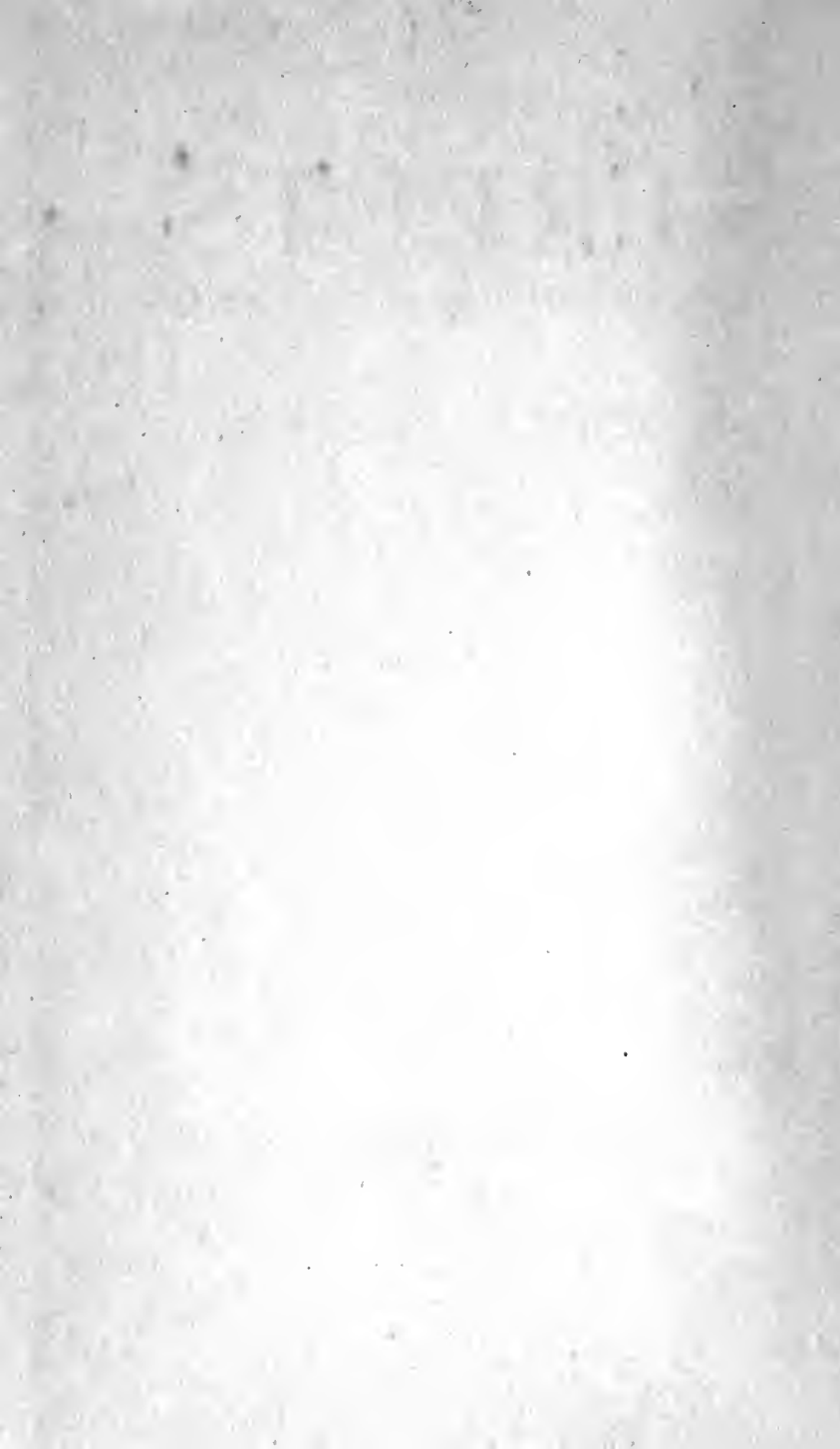
BY
DOUGLAS GOLDRING

MAX GOSCHEN



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STREETS

A BOOK OF LONDON VERSES

By DOUGLAS GOLDRING

LONDON
MAX GOSCHEN

1912

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By the same Author :

A COUNTRY BOY
WAYS OF ESCAPE
THE PERMANENT UNCLE

In preparation :

THE LOIRE
DREAM CITIES

688846

NOTE

A few of the poems in this book are taken from "A Country Boy," which is now out of print.

TO
M. E. G.

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STREETS

Church Street wears ever a smile, from having
watched bright belles
Coming home with young men, after balls, "at all
hours."
Its villas don't mind; they say, "Go it, young swells,
We've been young, too!" But Ebenezer Street
glowers.

Chapel deacons live here, with side whiskers and
pompous wives,
Who play hymns on Sundays, and deeply deplore
sinful acts.
They're convinced that their neighbours lead scandalous
private lives;
—That you and I ought to be shot if one "knew all
the facts."

Goreham Street's sad. Here lives old Jones the poet—
He knew Swinburne and Watts, and has letters from
"dear Charlie Keene."
Loo Isaacs lives here as well, and poor Captain
Jowett:
And the "Goreham Street Murder" was over at
number thirteen.

(Ah ! graveyard of hope, street of death and foul
night,
Where the sun never peers and the days are a prelude
to Hell :
—Street of “rooms” and cheap scent, and of broken-
down drabs who invite
Their Bloomsbury loves to its terrible Temperance
Hotel.)

Now George Street is busy and thronged with fat
touts in top hats;
Full of lawyers and banks and red buses and taxis
and noise,
Of beautiful youths from the suburbs, with waists and
white spats;
And earnest young men who perspire, and take classes
for boys.

But Halkin Street has a calm and a gently fastidious
air—
Here I shall live when I’m rich, with my wife and my
car—
When we are pleased, we never shout or ruffle our
hair,
And a lift of the eyebrow will show how annoyed we
are.

This is where life is lived nobly and sweetly and well :
Here are beauty, all hardly-won things, and courage
and love.

Why people worship the slums and the poor so, I
never can tell,

For it's virtue and baths and good cooking go hand
in glove !

ACACIA ROAD (BARKING)

All down Acacia Road there are small bow windows
Jutting out neighbourly heads in the street,
And in each sits, framed, a quiet old woman.
They watch the couples who pass or meet,

And some have borne sons, now ageing men ;
And most have seen death in their narrow house ;
Heard wedding bells for their grandchildren ;
Seen boys seek the bar for a last carouse ;

And heard wives cry, through thin plaster walls,
And watched babies laugh in the sun outside.
They treasure things up in their withered old hearts,
And always they sit looking out, with eyes wide.

These queer old women, they watch, as they sit
Through the whole long day, what happens beneath :
They miss not a thing. Sometimes they knit,
And sometimes dream a little, holding their
breath.

CHERRY GARDENS (ROTHERHITHE)

My man fell in, when he was drunk ;
They'd thrown him out o' the " King's Head."
From Wapping stairs he fell, and sunk.
He was my man ; he's dead.

On the cold slab, a sight to see,
They've laid him out—poor handsome chap—
In Rotherhithe's new mortuary.
His head should dent my lap,

But I mayn't warm him where he lies
Because I have no ring to show ;
Yet I've his bruises on my eyes :
And bore his child a month ago.

KINGSLAND ROAD, N.E.

*AS I went walking down the Kingsland Road
I met an old man with a very heavy load;
He had a crooked nose, and one tooth in his head,
And as I went by him he stopped me and said:*

I'm an old, old man
 With a very heavy sack—
But when I was a young 'un
 I'd a heavier pack.

Now my eyes are all dim,
 But my heart's full of fun;
Oh! heavy was my heart
 When my eyes were young.

I'd a cartload of trouble
 All along o' my wife.
—It was trying to be *happy*
 Made a Hell of my life!

I'm an old, old man
 With a gert heavy sack—
But when I was a young 'un
 It nigh broke my back!

*When I looked in his eyes I found that they were blue,
And the skin of his face it was wrinkled through and
through.*

*He had big hairy ears, and his beard it was white:
And twittering and laughing he passed into the night.*

NEWPORT STREET, E.

Down Newport Street, last Sunday night,
Jim stabbed his sweetheart in the breast :
She screamed and fell, a dreadful sight,
And Jim strode on like one possest.

O love's a curse to them that's young !
'Twas all because of love and drink ;
Why couldn't the silly hold her tongue,
Or stop, before she spoke, to think ?

She played with fire, did pretty Nell,
So Jim must hang ere summer's here :
God ! what a crowd are sent to Hell
Through love, and poverty and beer.

THE SPANISH SAILOR (CHARLTON VALE)

Through lines of lights the river glides,
 Bestrewn with many a green-eyed ship,
And swiftly down the slinking tides
 All night the heavy steamers slip.

Bright shone the moon when he slunk down,
 A-sailing to some foreign parts,
Past Greenwich and past Gravesend Town,
 A-caring nought for broken hearts.

'Twas in July. He kissed and fled :
 He stole my all and slipt to sea,
And now I wish that I was dead
 —Or that his arms were crushing me.

WALWORTH ROAD

Dreams fairly haunt the Walworth Road (S.E.);
Ride on the bonnets of the passers-by;
Slide down the chimneys, and fly in between
Warped, weasened doors and well-worn lintel-boards;
Come in at windows and invade small rooms
To chatter archly in old women's ears,
Making them laugh cracked laughter, deep in the
throat,
And weep with sweet, long, memorable thoughts. . . .

They make bent grandfathers recall the days
They played the fool in the sun, under the sky,
And were the deuce with women, and finer chaps
"Than ever you get, in these degenerate times." . . .

And then, they love to hover where maids sleep,
Stirring the dewy lashes of soft eyes,
Dimpling warm cheeks and parting tender lips.
And in small ears, half-hidden in tangled curls
They tinkle such sly secrets of delight
That, when the sun cries "shame" to slugabeds,
These wake, cooing like doves, with little trills and
laughs

And memories of a kiss, in that dream world
Where " he " had swapped his bowler for a crown,
And was a prince, and rode a great white horse ! . . .

To the strong lads they whisper of the wars,
Of glory and red coats; or of bright waves
Tumbling, a foam of white, over a ship's dipped nose,
In some tumultuous, splendid, sun-bathed sea;
Or of adventures, where the world is warm
And palm-trees stand above a glittering beach
Under deep skies; where you may chance to meet
Paul and Virginia; or an Arab horde—
Slave-traders all, with muskets damascened—
Or talk to small brown girls with nothing on. . . .

Again, they tell of Rovers, from Sallee,
With pistols in their belts, who cry " Hands Up,"
But get a punch in the nose from British boys,
Who steal their long feluccas with tall sails,
And go adventuring through the burning blue,
And meet a flight of porpoises and a dolphin,
And make an island (as the daylight fades)
Which has a fierce volcano in her midst
And a little white port, with clustering white houses,
And pirate vessels in her anchorage. . . .

They are brave tales you broider, elfin dreams !
Yet when the dawn awakens shining eyes,
The same brown trams are surging to the Bridge,
The same thin, grimy trees stand looking on ;
Nothing is changed. But oh, the day would be
How dead without you !—in the Walworth Road.

FRONT DOORS (BAYSWATER)

From Notting Hill to Hyde Park Square
The streets have an inhuman air,
The houses—(six imposing floors;
Dark, formidable, fierce front doors;
Tall windows, sightless, sealed and blind;
Ball-room or billiard-room behind)—
Must shelter, they're so vast and cold,
None but the ugly and the old. . . .

Watch, as you wander hereabout,
The people who go in and out !
Sleek-bellied men in varnished hats,
Fur coats, black trousers, gleaming spats
Flock in procession, pompous, grand,
Or drive in motors to the Strand;
And massive women, towering high,
Dart glances from a hawklike eye,
Pause, sniffing the post-luncheon breeze,
Then drive (to train for several teas),
Snub the companion, pat the dog,
Sneeze, cough and grumble at the fog.

Jerusalem no more golden is
Than gloomy Bayswater I wis !
Her portals strike an awe profound—
“ Mean wanderers, this is holy ground ;
Stop impropriety of tone ;
Hawkers and circulars begone ”—
For here the ruling race reside
And guard our pledges and their pride.
Her doors are sour : they never smile
But icily stare for mile on mile—
Vast, supercilious, gleaming, hard :
Fastened securely, bolted, barred !

GLADSTONE TERRACE

A very sordid street of red and green—
Red houses and green paint—but in between
Each villa lies a little garden space,
Cherished on summer Sundays. See his face
(A two-pound clerk next morning), as he sweats,
Tending the strawberries which his baby eats !

A fool is he, not virtuous, but content :
He hears no wings of God omnipotent,
Nor feels the stirring of His mighty breath.
Yet scorn not Gladstone Terrace in your pride,
For see, what hopes and longings here reside,
What gracious mysteries of love and death.

LITTLE HOUSES (HILL STREET)

Little houses, though prim, have often a secret glance
That can speak to a heart outside—as *one* speaks
to me !—

And even their close-drawn curtains seem to enhance
The charm of their sly reserve, of their mystery. . .

I like to walk through the Square to your quiet street,
And look at your windows—with just a suspicion
of pride—

For I may go in, now and then, and sit at your feet,
But the people who pass can't guess what it's like,
inside.

They haven't a notion—but *I* see your small armchair
And your dog, by the fire, and your novel thrown
on the floor ;

And I know there will always be flowers when you
are there,

And always a smile for me, when I open your
door !

“LIVING IN” (BRIXTON RISE)

Through the small window comes the roar
Of all the world of light outside :
It is not midnight, yet our door
Is shut on us, and we are tied.

What is he doing now—my dear?
I left him all on fire for me :
Will he be true? Oh God, I fear
He'll buy what I would give him free !

THE BALLAD OF THE BRAVE SOLDIER (CHELSEA EMBANKMENT)

She wandered by the river's brink,
Her stricken heart stood still :
She listened for his hastening step,
With mind to win or kill.

From Ipswich up to London Town
Long days, long nights walked she :
And now had tracked the soldier down
Who caused her shame to be.

She could not breathe, her throat grew dry,
Her soldier looked so brave and strong :
“ Why Moll, my girl ”—she heard him cry—
“ What brings you here along ? ”

“ From Ipswich, Dick, I've brought the son,”
She moaned, “ your broken promise gave.”
He looked and laughed : “ Poor little one !
I've used you ill, I have.”

She sank, and saw him smile good-bye—

She who had thought to kill or win.

He was too fine, too bold to die,

The weak must suffer for his sin.

MARE STREET, N.E.

In Mare Street, Hackney, Sunday nights,
My Jim he'd search for souls to save :
Beneath one of them showman's lights
He'd stand up white and brave.

“ And who's for Jesus now ? ” he'd call,
“ And who's for Love that's strong ?
Repent, believe : there's 'eaven for all
That turns and flees from wrong . . . ”

I wish no harm to my poor Jim,
But God strike Lizzie dead !
'Twas cruel of her to lead the hymn,
With me laid ill, in bed.

They're gone—last month—to Leytonstone ;
Jim runs a chapel there ; .
And I'm left hungering here alone,
While *she* joins him in prayer.

IN LODGINGS : CORAM STREET

I

Long roads that in the moon gleam white,
Long roads that climb into the sky,
They haunt me in this London night,
I knew them well in days gone by—

Knew them and loved them ; bright they shone—
They led to high Olympian plains,
Where all the throneless Gods lived on
And sirens sang their sweetest strains ;

Where temples old of Holy Greece
Rose dazzling, in diviner air,
And tranquil, in a timeless peace,
Love grew to friendship fine and rare !

Far from a world of sordid toil
They led, those roads of long ago :
They climbed the skies to fairy soil,
They glittered like a line of snow.

II

The shuddering wind goes charging down the street,
Against my window pelts the pitiless rain;
My dying fire gives forth but little heat,
And aching sadness fills my tired brain
And all my soul with pain.

Never did London seem so bleak and gray,
Nor yet so heartless, nor so cold, before.
I long from hence to rise and flee away
To the lone wildness of an angry shore,
And hear the breakers roar.

I long to climb some perilous cliff to-night,
And feel the sharp rain strike my tingling face,
And watch the savage sea's superb delight,
And stand engirdled by the winds' embrace,
That clasps and leave no trace.

There could I sing my soul's most secret songs,
There tell the mad winds all my hopes and fears,
And those high things for which my spirit longs;
And pour, with bitterness of unshed tears,
My woes into night's ears.

III

I walked the dusty, crowded road,
With merry comrades by my side :
Brave in the sun we swung along
For we were young, the world was wide.

But in the silent, star-bright night,
When song and story both were done,
Sadly I lay me down to sleep
For I was restless and alone.

Although my friends were many, yet
I knew not one to whom to say :
“ I love you with my whole soul’s might ! ”
But that—Dear Heart—was yesterday.

IV

Sick am I of work and pleasure, of the smell of smoke
and scent,
Sick of women, of each kind or hungry face,
Utterly at war with toiling for a coin so quickly spent :
And I want to sleep and dream in a green place.

There'll be violets in the meadows, and the stream
behind the farm
Will be fringed with long rich grass and golden
flowers :
And O ! to see my home again, when summer suns
shine warm,
Will be Heaven after London's dreary hours.

SONGE D'AMOUR APRÈS LE BAL (HYDE
PARK TERRACE)

*Through the wide casement, when Dawn's waking
smile*

*First flushed across the east, and all the town
Dreamed in its sleep, we stood and gazed awhile—
Hushed at the thought of sacred things unknown.*

For new love trembled on our lips,
And in our eyes there shone the light
That kindled in the violet night,
And in your rose-pink finger tips,
That touched my hand and cheek and hair
Thrilled fiery passion, and your form
Swayed, in my arms, into a storm
Of rapture, that o'erthrew despair.
O dearest, you were very fair,
And love had smiled across the skies—
It seemed so very sweet and wise
To kiss your eyes and lips and hair;
So when the rosy dawn grew bright
And the tired dancers crept away,
There, in the splendour of the day,
I claimed and captured my delight !

*Through the wide casement came the winds of love,
And the pale sky was tender blue, above. . . .
The sparrows twittered on the window-sill—
Then, for a little while, the world was still.*

VIENNESE WALTZ (GRAFTON STREET)

Dreamy and soft and sad the waltz began.
Lo ! we were dancing through a wood, where ran
A silent stream on which the full moon gleamed,
And there were gentle fairies there, who seemed
Forsaken by their lovers and forlorn :
But while we danced the earliest breath of morn
Fluttered the leaves and made the fairies' eyes
Shine bright with hope and tremulous surprise.
And by and by the music flashed and thrilled—
With God-like ecstasy our hearts were filled—
And you became a gentle fairy too,
And I your errant lover, brave and true.
Passion possessed us as we glided o'er
The polished spaces of the waving floor,
And mad the music rose, until suspense
Clutched at our throats and tore at every sense,
And then it drooped, and all the pity of love
Fell on our souls, whilst joyously, above
The tall black trees, there gleamed the magic light
Of rose-red dawn, and then a strange delight
Turned all our woe to little, choking cries. . . .
And so the music died in smiles and sighs.

SHE-DEVIL (DAVIES STREET)

White arms, Love, you have, and thin fingers with
glittering nails,
And the soft blue smoke curls up from your parted
mouth !

The delicate rose of your cheeks never varies nor pales,
And your frocks and your furs are perfection—
devourer of youth !

It is charming to think of your room and you, wicked,
inside—

Adorable snake, with a snake's unflickering eyes,
And an intimate smile (to share which, fools have died)
And lips soft as a girl's and like a siren's, wise !

Devourer of youth ! You are never alone by your fire,
You have always a boy there, who thinks you a
goddess, ill-used,

And adores you with passion, and brings you the gifts
you desire—

And the fiercer he burns, Dear, the better he keeps you
amused !

GREAT RUSSELL STREET

As I climb the breathless stairs
To my garret 'neath the roof,
Past the ladies singing airs
From the latest Opéra-bouffe—
I can see her little feet
Twinkling in the brilliant light,
I can hear the words so sweet
That she said for my delight,
When the whirling dance was over
And she joined me in the night.

As I climb the breathless stairs
To my garret 'neath the roof,
All her pretty, subtle airs,
As she kept me half-alooft,
Fill my thoughts and drown my cares;
I can hear her soft reproof
When I kissed her unawares,
As I climbed the happy stairs
To my garret 'neath the roof.

ST JAMES'S PARK

Dark shadowy trees on either hand,
While, at the end, majestic lights
Stream from the palace. Here a band
Of fairies plays on charmed nights;
And on the lake, obscure and still,
Float secret stealthy water-fowl,
While odd fantastic shapes, at will
Along the moonlit pathways prowl.
And there, see ! there is pale Pierrette,
And Pierrot merry with despair,
And Harlequin, and Mistigrette,
And Colombine with wayward hair.
How all the crowd on that smooth lawn
Lit by the stars, grimace and jeer ;
And look, beyond . . . a dancing faun,
And satyrs that make eyes and leer !
Who would believe in London Town
Such funny creatures could parade,
That such strange Gods would wander down
To join a grotesque masquerade ?
Watteau, Lancret or Fragonard
Has surely dreamed this curious throng ;

For hark ! the sound of a guitar,
And voices in an old sad song. . . .
I lean and listen from my seat,
Lost in delight—no townsman now—
And hear the fairy folk repeat
In silvery tones their midnight vow.

FINCHLEY ROAD

*I and my love, and London nights,
Sufficient for our naïve delights.
Now in the evening, after work,
We race into the gathering murk
Together, on the Child's Hill 'bus,
While all the stars smile down on us.*

We sigh not for Venetian skies,
Where gold stars stud the heavens' blue dome,
And silently the dark boat flies
Down narrow waterways to home;
Where heavy shadows lean across
Long, murderous creeks with lapping waves,
And where in dim, mysterious caves
Seven lamps burn red before a cross.

We want not Paris, loud and bright,
Bedizened, poudré and impure—
We do not need her common lure,
Her insolent aids to charm the night.

Not haunting Stamboul calls us two
With tinklings of a myriad bells,
Nor islands in the distant blue
Where soft sea-music sinks and swells.

No. London is more rarely sweet
Than any town we're like to meet,
And all we want is London, spring—
For love's most perfect blossoming. . . .

*Now in the evening, after work,
We race into the gathering murk
Together, on the Child's Hill 'bus,
While all the stars smile down on us—
I and my love, and London nights,
Sufficient for our naïve delights!*

SUNSET IN THE SPRING (TRAFALGAR SQUARE)

Have you not seen, emerging from the Strand
On warm-breathed evenings when the sun has set,
How, suddenly, you come on fairyland,
And sly Romance has snared you in her net?

How fair those trooping girls are—eyes how bright—
Who hurry o'er the silent square to meet
The boys who wait them in the lingering light:
How sweet to hear their little tapping feet!
They have no time to watch the sky above,
For nothing is so beautiful as love.

Only the passionate dreamer takes delight
In the great pageant of the approaching night,
Who striving, caged, to burst his spirit's bars,
Laughs at the flushed green sky, begemmed
With stars.

OAK HILL WAY

He : May I stop and kiss you here,
O, my dear ?

She : You may stop, but I'll not stay :
I'm going homewards now—Good day !

He : Here's a lane, and quiet too :
'Tis where the folks from London woo,
Two and two.

She : It leads to Kilburn, where I live :
I promised I'd be back at five—
I must be quick, or I'll be late.
No, no—I dare not wait.

He : See, Maggie, it's called Lover's Lane,
So other girls are kind, that's plain.
This love's a thing that all men know :
There, link your arm in my arm—so.

She : I didn't think you were so silly :
Walk up—it's chilly.

He : O, since in life there's little bliss,
And most of it lies in a kiss—
Don't turn those cruel lips away,
But just one moment, Maggie, stay !

* * * * *

Lor ! here's the blessed street. Oh ! why. . . .

She : You foolish lad, don't *ask*. Good-bye.

WEST END LANE

Off through the dripping, moonless night,
Up West End Lane and Frogna! Rise,
They trace their footsteps by the light
Of love that fills their weary eyes.

“ Nellie, though Town’s a tiresome place,
With far less joy in it than tears,
To set my lips to your warm face
Is worth a sight of dismal years ! ”

“ And I’m so happy, Jack, with you,”
She whispers softly. . . . “ See, the rain
Has stopped, the clouds are broken through
And stars shine out, as plain as plain ! ”

Pausing, they gaze across the Heath
Submerged in fog—a dim hush’d lake
Wherein the wretched might seek death,
And lovers drown for dear Love’s sake.

Then clasping hands, and touching lips,
They dream beneath great sombre trees,
Whence large and solemn-falling drips
Are shaken by the restless breeze.

“ Oh, nothing’s half so sweet, my dear,
As kisses in the quiet night :
Lean close, and let me hold you near,
Put out your arms, and clasp me tight !

“ Why should we wait, so cold and wise ?
We’re only only human, Nell, we two ;
And even if love fades and dies—
I shall remember this : won’t you ? ”

HAMPSTEAD

I

Up from the desolate streets—the green, sweet hill !
(All crossed with scented paths, shut in by garden
walls
And hung with shadowy trees—dark paths and
still).
O, open plateau, glittering pond, and love that calls !

Here, ah ! here, to be gods, to forget !
Here to leave home and troubles that soil and blear.
Under the golden moon, when the sun has set,
Here to forget and kiss—O joy bought dear !

II

I love those small old houses, with bright front doors,
And shy windows that look on the Heath; they are
quiet and gay :

Old books, old silver they have (that my heart adores !)
And the women are slim, with soft voices and kind
things they say.

Their lives are one delicate tea—with the lamp not lit
In autumn and winter. In summer a rose
Climb in through the window wide, and caresses it;
And always there are *petit-fours*, music, and dreams—
and repose.

III

Fields where the ugly, with divine-grown eyes,
Bloom all to beauty of sweet look and word.

Trees, amorous trees, that fold maternal arms
Over joined lips and halting vows half-heard.

IV

Do you know Branch Hill? There are steps to the
right

When you reach the top, which climb to a walk
Shaded by elm-trees of great girth and height;
And there are seats there, where lovers talk.

And all in front is a valley, wide and deep—
In summer a place of murmurs and laughing
sighs :
In winter a sea of mists and deathly sleep,
Pierced by faint sobs and drowning, desolate
cries. . . .

V

It rained, the wet poured from the leaves ;
They by the churchyard ; entered in
And sheltered underneath the eaves ;
So sweetly close : yet firm her chin.

Her warmth, her fragrance thrilled his blood ;
She held his eager lips away,
But softly bidding him " be good,"
His arm she let around her stay.

When the shower stopped his hopes sank low,
—Farewell kind walls and darkling spire—
They walked forlornly down Church Row ;
Her eyes grown big ; his lips on fire.

Down Frogmal Lane to Fortune Green—
There parted ; 'neath a watery moon.
His heart went throbbing " Might have been,"
But hers a-trembling " Not too soon."

VI

At Jack Straw's Castle, streaks of yellow light
Pour from the bar upon a preacher's head
Who howls unheeded warnings to the night :
Two p'licemen say he ought to be in bed.

Lonely young men walk, eager, to and fro
And search the passing faces—some find mates ;
Against the railings leans a giggling row ;
An amorous chauffeur puffs his horn and waits.

The crowds move up and down, white dresses gleam ;
Some strolling niggers play a tune that trips,
While couples meet and glance, and leave the stream,
And youths look plaintively at young girls' lips.

VII

So, to the Pines. Ah, here, in the hush'd blue
You may spy cities, dim in the dim sky,
Stretching strange roadways to the inner view.
See! See!—oh, loved one, see! Hope *shall* not
die . . .

RICHMOND PARK

I

What do I want with your little, shrinking love?
See, I have a star in my hand, that I snatched from the
blue above,
I have the moon under my arm; and dreams in my
heart, that cry
And, look, the glow of my city, my home—like blood-
red fire in the sky!
You cannot bind me with cords, while you give or
withhold little kisses,
I will fly off and forget. . . .
Ah!

II

How can you tell ? you say—your heart cries “wait” :
You will not answer now, it grows so late—
And I stand, hungry, by your small, green gate !

Dear, if you would but trust Love’s whispered word !
Listen a little while—you turn away.
What ? Your head droops. . . . You are frightened !
Run in and hide. . . .

DINNER-TIME (SLOANE STREET)

The lamp gives a softened light that is like a caress,
And the fire gleams cosy and red in the open grate,
Warming your bosom and neck and your shimmering
dress;
And the people begin to arrive, for it's five to eight.

I'm not very near you at dinner—it wouldn't be wise,
And nobody guesses the things that we say, you and I,
When, perhaps, from the frail little tumbler, we lift
our eyes
And agree that the wine's a success, and deliciously
dry. . . .

Fine wine and fine jewels, white linen and beautiful
frocks,
Kind glances and musical laughter and delicate food !
And my tie's well tied, and I'm pleased with my black
silk socks ;
Is it earthy of me to find these good things good ?

BY THE SAME AUTHOR.

A COUNTRY BOY, & OTHER POEMS



SOME PRESS OPINIONS

E. H. L. in the *Manchester Guardian*, Oct. 11, 1910.

It is an uncommon pleasure to pick up a book so full of lyric freshness and charm as "A Country Boy, and Other Poems," by Douglas Goldring (Adelphi Press, pp. 77, 1s. net). The title-poem, consisting of a number of lyrics in various metres, has an atmosphere of familiar yet half-remote things, of joy and sorrows in the deep pools and bubbling springs of life, that recall Heine. Take any of these three verses, each of them fixing so surely and with such musical fitness the intensity of the moment :

Then over the hill,
While the moon is yet young,
I wander, until
My beloved has sung—
The nightingale lyric with love.

Then I move
From the wideness that stretches so far—
The boundless, disturbing, and terrible down—
To the warmth of the town
And the joys of the street and the bar;
Longing and hopeless; afraid,
Dreaming of love.

* * * * *

Why should we wait, so cold and wise?
We're only human, Nell, we two;
And even if love fades and dies—
I shall remember this: won't you?

* * * * *

The shuddering wind goes charging down the street,
Against my window pelts the pitiless rain;
My dying fire gives forth but little heat,
And aching sadness fills my tired brain
And all my soul with pain.

There is something of the charm of Mr Yeats in

O, the spring is sweet in London, Rose.

and

It's to Juillac-le-Coq, where the vines stretch o'er the
plain,
And the little streams are running eau-de-vie and
sweet champagne,

That I'd take my pipe and smoke it underneath a
sunny wall,
And sing my songs, and dream my dreams, and
never work at all.
For the sun's bright, and the moon's bright, and all
the women's eyes
Are bright there; and joy's there, and love that fools
despise.

One or two of the " Impressions of places " recall, without discredit, Henley's topical verses. The mention of these three other poets must not suggest a lack of originality in Mr Goldring's work; his verse has, most certainly, a spontaneous and subtle charm of its own. His " Christmas," " Faith," and " The Singer's Journey " are inspired by a *joie de vivre* and individuality that mark him as a very welcome recruit to the higher ranks of our minor poets. One ventures to add a short quotation from the last-named poem to show how, outside lyrical forms, Mr Goldring gets his effects by the same simplicities and unfailing sense of rhythm :

I made no fine resolve, I shed no tears;
I knew that God was good, that she was dear,
Only I wondered why these things had been,
Why I was glad I loved, that she had seen.

She was too pure to care, perhaps too cold,
So, in the wilderness I should grow old,
With but the memory of her wide grave eyes
To comfort me, shut out from Paradise.



The *Birmingham Daily Post*.

If Mr Douglas Goldring does not belie the promise of his first book, a good deal will be heard of him, and the attractively produced little volume before us will become precious to the collector. What matters above all else in a young poet is personality—individuality of feeling and outlook. Possessing this, his style may safely be left to develop itself; and this quality is unmistakably present on every page of "A Country Boy, and Other Poems." There are occasional indiscretions in artistic form, a few lapses into the trivial, but they are rare and of no importance beside the vitality and intensity of feeling that make the book notable. Mr Goldring does not propound any new philosophy in his poetry—for which we thank him. Beauty and change—these two, woven into one experience, are the chief sources of his inspiration, as they are of half the lyric poetry in

the world. Most people under the influence of the experience become sentimental; the poet becomes passionate, and speaks not tearfully but poignantly. Mr Goldring, being a poet, is everywhere keenly sensitive to the beauty of the natural world, and no less so to the certainty of the passing of this beauty; but he sings of his perception not only with tenderness, but with strength and gracious humour—qualities lacking in much that is accomplished in modern verse. Already his individuality of vision is beginning to make its own music.

We quote a little poem called “Westminster Bridge”:

The seagulls wheel aloft and sink,
Slide swiftly circlewise and fade
To where the west is olive-pink,
And rosy mists the river shade.

And sullen, purposeful, and strange
The silent stream glides on, beneath
The patient bridge that will not change
And all the city holds its breath.

Then gazing towards the sunken sun
A pale girl eyes his lingering gleam,
A soul whose little day is done,
For whom will come no night, no dream.

Mr James Elroy Flecker, in *The Cambridge Review*,
March, 9, 1911.

Mr Goldring is a young poet : his technique in these days, when so high a standard is set, is careless : he is not remarkable for originality or thought. Yet one feels that a book like his "Country Boy" ought to sell thousands, not mere hundreds, so full it is of the joy of life, of modern love and sorrow. It is a book about the people, for the people. It is full of the magic of proper names :

And ere he went to London
Our maidens pleased him well,
As little Rose from Yeovil
And dozens more can tell.

Is there not all the honey and sweetness and summer of the West Country in the sound of her—"little Rose from Yeovil." Could anything give the weariness of suburban pavements, yet make them sublime, better than this :

Off through the dripping moonless night,
Up West End Lane and Frogna! rise,
They trace their footsteps, by the light
Of love that fills their weary eyes.

For he knows, as all true modern poets know, that the world has become a fairy world again, and that the name of Camden Town can haunt us as much as Xanadu, nay more. We cannot place him with Mr Yeats, Mr Housman, or Mr Masfield : but he should be loved by thousands, and the student of the future will treasure his work as a document of fine English sentiment and feeling long after our Francis Thompson, our Watson, and our Trench are forgotten.



The Evening Standard, June 9, 1910.

There are lines and verses in Mr Goldring's poems that suggest he will one day be more widely heard of. He has genuine feeling, and knows that simplicity is more convincing than wealth of image.



The Westminster Gazette, October 8, 1910.

His verse is at present too subjective to be really great, but he has a very distinct poetic gift, and is going the right way to work with it.

The Academy, August 20, 1910.

A quality of great charm runs through the verses of "A Country Boy," by Douglas Goldring. We find much genuine pleasure in his lyrics.



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